



Bete Noire



👁 25 ✓ 3 ★ 5

Chapter 1 by Ian

I was distracted. So much so that, by the time I saw the shadow fall across the frosted glass in my office door, I barely had time to throw the bottle of Jack in the filing cabinet, snatch up my smouldering Marlborough and loll back in my chair like a proper gumshoe. Thankfully my tie was already askew and the stubble was just so.

She sashayed into my office like clay in the hands of a distracted potter and threw back her long black hair. I fought every instinct to look her up and down and stared hard into her black, black eyes. She held my gaze for a couple of years and eventually gave her head an irritable toss and tapped her foot.

My brain was working the angles, calculating and speculating: "Who that hell let that huge horse into my office? And how am I going to get it back down the stairs?" I wondered.

I could sense the hand of Racetrack Charlie - or one of his goons.

Chapter 2 by madhav



"Detective Walker? Nice to meet you," the shriveled detective heard her say. However, the next couple of words he did not catch, as he was too busy questioning her presence in his office.

Flashes of Racetrack Charlie broke him from the spell he was cast in.

"Yes, yes, please...have a seat," Walker said as he reached for his coat. It was not necessary, but at least it could buy him a few seconds to regain his composure "What brings you here Miss "

"Please just call me Fiona"

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"Fiona, Alright"

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Chapter 3 by Lab Tale



The two stood in silence, unsure of how to continue.

This was not the first time Racetrack Charlie had led a horse to Walker's office. Once, Walker had returned to find a stallion destroying his tiny workspace while a phonograph in a protective iron cage played a big band album at twice the normal speed.

Another time Walker had returned to find a donkey continually kicking his desk. Attached to the ribbon around its neck was a giant card that said "Happy Birthday Walker" in exquisite calligraphy. Walker didn't think Racetrack Charlie stabled donkeys, but he tried to concentrate on keeping his desk in one point.

Yes, Walker needed to have a talk with Racetrack Charlie. And, he needed better locks on his doors.

Walker was thankful that this horse could at least communicate with him, although he had never met a talking horse before and wasn't sure how to approach the situation.

Fiona seemed annoyed that Walker had offered her a seat. He should know full well a horse couldn't sit in one of the second-hand chairs he had in his office. Was he being polite? Was he having a joke at her expense? The situation made her self-conscious.

The silence had hung in the air for too long. "The reason I'm here," Fiona began...

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